

English 313: Advanced Expository Writing for Elementary Education Majors

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

ShelliRae Spotts

Email: spottedpen@gmail.com

Office: 4031 JKB

Office hours: MWF 1-2pm, TTH 3-5pm, or by appointment

Box: 4113 JFSB; weekdays 8–5

TEXTS, SUPPLIES, AND RESOURCES

Writing Down the Bones, Natalie Goldberg

Wondrous Words, Katie Wood Ray

Selected short readings (on Learning Suite)

You will also need to purchase an inexpensive writer's notebook

Important Sites:

Learning Suite at learningsuite.byu.edu ; in particular the content page

Writing and Research Center: 4026 JKB or 3233 HBLL; <http://english.byu.edu/writingcenter>

Library Instruction: <http://net.lib.byu.edu/instruction/>

Purdue Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource>

Utah Education Network: <http://www.uen.org>

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

English 313 is an advanced writing course designed to help you become more aware of the rhetorical principles and situations you will find practiced by professionals and academics in the field of education. This course will provide you with opportunities to engage in writing and thinking about the conversations in your field, and will help you understand and apply rhetorical principles to the situations you will face in your future as writers and elementary school teachers. It will also give you the necessary tools to feel confident as a writer, so you can then teach the principles of effective writing to others. I believe that you have to be confident in your abilities as a writer before you can teach the principles of “good” writing to others—particularly to children.

BYU Course Outcomes

Process:

Employ informed and flexible processes for writing and speaking, including creating or finding ideas, evidence, and data; planning and drafting; revising ; editing; and designing and presenting a successful message for a specific rhetorical situation.

Write coherent and unified texts with a correct, clear, and graceful prose style, including effective introductions, clear thesis statements, support, smooth transitions, and strong conclusions.

Research:

Utilize library and electronic resources to locate relevant information, assess reliability and usefulness, and effectively and ethically incorporate it to your writing using APA documentation. Closely read and analyze texts in the literature of education, questioning underlying assumptions, conclusions, and uses of evidence.

Revision:

Effectively evaluate and comment on the writing of others to facilitate revision.
Evaluate the quality of student writing and respond in such a way as to facilitate improvement.

Pedagogy:

Identify and evaluate philosophies and methods of teaching writing to children.

Write a well-argued, persuasive discussion on a focused, significant issue in writing instruction for children, including appropriate counter-arguments and evidence.

Distinguish between and explain different theories and methods of teaching writing to school-aged children.

Effectively apply those theories and methods to the teaching of writing in an elementary school setting.

Advocacy and Social Change:

Understand how strong writing abilities and integrated language arts skills will help children and adults meet the challenges of using writing and education to change society and advocate for those who need it.

My main goals for each student in the course are:

To help you become proficient writers

To prepare you to teach writing with confidence

I want you to care about writing and become enthralled with the possibilities found through this medium of art. In short I want you to become excited about writing.

Along with these goals, there are additional outcomes that I hope we will achieve together:

Consider the relationship between learning to write and learning to teach writing

Use various methods of invention, organization, and style to adapt written and oral communications to specific rhetorical situations—including the elementary classroom

Collaborate with peers, and effectively evaluate and comment on their writing

Learn/use research skills to engage in a scholarly conversations about teaching writing

Compile a professional teaching portfolio to aid you in the job market

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments

Class Participation—

Participation (50)

Reading Roll (50)

The Writing Teacher as Writer—

Writer's Journal (300)
Personal Narrative (100)
Writing Down the Bones essay (100)

Disciplinary Research—

Research Paper (300)
Annotated Bibliography (50)
Research Presentation (50)
Research Proposal (50)

Writing Pedagogy—

Lesson plan (100)
Oral presentation of lesson plan (50)
Mentor Text Anthology Piece (50)

Professionalization—

Teaching Portfolio (includes: teaching philosophy, writing program and lesson plans, CV) (150)
Final Exam (100)

Assignment Information

We will talk about each of these assignments extensively so you will know what is expected of you well ahead of time. But here is a little sneak peek:

Participation (50 points)—

Participation: This is more than just being a warm body in the room. Engage. Elaborate. Ask. This is more than merely answering questions, but also asking questions, bringing up key passages, responding to your classmates, making sure we are all thinking deeply about the topics at hand.

Reading Roll (50 points): All reading is required. At a random date during the semester I will pass around a sheet where you will be accountable for having completed all the assigned readings. This is a Pass/Fail, "all or nothing" grading scale. Please be aware there is no partial credit given.

The Teacher as Writer—

Writer's Journal (300 points): You will learn the craft of writing by keeping a writer's journal. You will be graded for completion (3 entries per week), experimentation, and quality of entries.

Personal Narrative (100 points): You will write a 3-4 page personal narrative (worth up to 100 points).

Writing Down the Bones essay (100 points): You will be writing a 3-page essay responding to Natalie Golberg's book *Writing Down the Bones*.

Disciplinary Research—

Collaborative Research Paper (300 points): You will write an 8-10 page research paper relating to issues in elementary writing instruction. You will research in groups of 2-3 students.

Annotated Bibliography (50 points): You will compile an annotated list of research and reference material to help you in writing your paper.

Group Evaluation (50 points): Your group member(s) will evaluate your teamwork on the research portion of the paper.

Research Presentations (50 points): You and your team will give a 5-minute presentation explaining your research project and the different conclusions you came to.

Writing Pedagogy—

Lesson Plan and presentation (100 points for lesson plan 50 points for oral presentation): You will write a lesson plan (worth 100 points) and present it to the class in 5 minutes (worth 50 points).

Mentor Text Anthology Piece (50 points): You will write a brief piece for a class anthology focusing on using 'mentor texts' to teach writing.

Professionalization—

Teaching Portfolio (150 points): Your portfolio consists of 4 elements:

Teaching Philosophy: You will write a teaching philosophy (worth 50 points)

Writing Program: You will design a writing program (worth 25 points) consistent with your philosophies for teaching and grading writing.

Lesson Plans: You will create 2 lesson plans (worth 25 points each) which are good samples of how you would teach a section of one unit from your writing program.

CV: You will compile a Curriculum Vitae that you can use as you apply for teaching positions.

Aesthetics: You will be assessed on the visual rhetoric of your site.

Final Exam (100 points): The final exam is scheduled by the University. In keeping with strictly enforced university policy, absolutely no early or late exams will be given and you will fail the course if you miss the final. Please inform your family immediately and plan travel arrangements accordingly.

*See final exam times for your class at end of "Schedule"

Grading Notes:

An "A" paper is a WOW paper. Amaze me! Astonish me! Astound me! You have mastered the craft being taught.

A "B" paper engages the reader, is well organized, presents a clear thesis, and exhibits a strong grasp of the assignment's goals. It exceeds the expectations of the assignment.

A "C" paper interests the reader, is organized, presents a thesis, and exhibits an awareness of the assignment's goals. It meets the assignment's requirements.

A "D" paper attempts to interest the reader, follows some order, and exhibits some idea of the assignment's goals. This paper falls short of the minimum expectations required.

Keep in mind that grades are not a punishment; rather, they are an expression of concern. I want you to learn and succeed. Rest assured, I base my grades on the expectations/rubrics that I will outline on the assignment sheets. If you feel you have been unjustly evaluated, I would ask that you wait at least one day (24 hours) to collect your thoughts and reread your paper, the rubric, and my comments before you contact me. I will then meet with you and we will review your assignment together addressing your specific concerns. Of course this does not apply to clerical errors.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: In order to contribute and participate in class discussions, you need to be here!

Things to Remember:

You get 3 “freebies” (no questions asked).

Each absence after those initial three results in a 1/3 grade reduction off your final grade (a B+ à B).

If a student misses more than a third of any class period, they will be considered absent for the day. That means if you are more than 15 minutes late or leave class more than 15 minutes early, it is an absence.

If you must be absent on the day a paper is due, please arrange to get the paper to me on time or earlier or I will consider it late.

A skipped out-of-class conference with me counts as an absence.

Tardy: Being “tardy” is arriving after the bell.

3 tardies equals one absence.

The Humanity Clause

One of the most important concepts that I hope you learn in this class is how to effectively communicate. If you have extenuating circumstances, or concerns communicate with me as soon as possible. I will do my best to work with you.

Revision Policy: You may revise papers. In order to do a revision, you must first go to the university writing center, and write a 1 page paper explaining your revisions.

Google Drive: To make collaboration and access easier we will use Google Drive for our peer review and for turning in major papers. Please get a google account before the semester starts. I will create a shared folder for the class, and then each student can create folders and documents within the class folder to produce an online portfolio of your work.. You will also include reflective writing in these folders. At the start of the semester I will have you sign a FERPA release that lets us comment on your writing in Google Drive. However, to respect your privacy final grades will be never be posted on the shared drive.

A few notes about classroom expectations:

Preparation: I reserve the right to call on you at any time in class. Reading each text carefully and reflecting on the reading using online discussion will help you prepare to participate fully in our classroom discussions. To be well prepared, you must bring your texts to class. I have a “no opt out” rule, so “I don’t know” won’t let you off the hook. Think, and let’s discuss.

Respect: Not only do you need to listen to others’ comments, you also must respect them. That doesn’t mean you have to agree, but demeaning or belittling comments about other people or their ideas will result in an absence, and you may be asked to leave for the day.

Communication: If neither 1) the syllabus nor 2) your classmates can answer your questions, please e-mail me (spottedpen@gmail.com), and I will try to respond as quickly as I can. I will also frequently communicate important details about assignments and readings via emails/ announcements to the entire class, so check your email regularly for updates.

Note: I do not regularly check or respond to emails from 5pm Friday to 8am Monday.

Late Assignments:

Papers and other assignments are due by the end of the day on the specified due dates.

I do not accept emailed papers.

Late work will be penalized 5 percent each day—not each class period—each day it is late.

In the case of a dire emergency that prevents you from completing your work on time, please talk to me at the time of the crisis so we can work something out.

Failure Policy: You must write a 1) research paper and 2) complete the final to pass the course. Failure to turn in the research paper will result in a failing grade for the course. Missing the final exam will also result in an automatic course failure.

Honor Code and Plagiarism: Students are expected to uphold the Honor Code they signed. Academic dishonesty is not tolerated at the university. Students who inadvertently plagiarize will be given an opportunity to correct their mistake. However, any paper that is deliberately plagiarized will not be accepted. The student will receive zero points for the assignment, may fail the course, and/or may be referred to the Honor Code Office. Please see full detail on plagiarism as constituted in the Honor Code at <http://campuslife.byu.edu/honorcode>.

Sexual Harassment: BYU's policy against sexual harassment protects both employees of the University as well as students. Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, students who encounter sexual harassment from other students are protected. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor, contact the campus EEO office (422-5895), or contact the Honor Code Office (422-2847).

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (enacted in 1990) prohibits discrimination based on disability in employment, public service, public accommodations, telecommunications, and transportation. The Act is intended to afford the disabled equal opportunity and full participation in life activities. If you have a disability and need accommodation, please contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (378-2767).

And Remember...

I am here for you! I want you to succeed and be rewarded for your efforts. Please email me or meet with me in person if you are having trouble with a concept, assignment, or are feeling overwhelmed. Do not wait until the end of semester. Approach me as soon as the concern arises. Part of the college experience is learning to talk with your instructors and collaborate with them.